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## STRAYS OF OPINION

The project of establishing an American Salon, comparable with the great exhibitions of Europe, is one that should meet the approval and command the support of all who take pride in American work. A national art presupposes a national art center. England has its Royal Academy and France its Paris Salon, and the art of both countries is distinctively and laudably national. America has no such institution, and its art, while robust and progressive, is more the exponent of foreign influences and ideals than an embodiment of national aspiration.

America has no lack of exhibitions that pass under the name of salons, but these are too often the product of mere local enterprise, in which petty civic glory, or jealousy, vaunts itself. The average American artist to-day attaches more honor to an obscure hanging in the Paris Salon than to the choicest positions in all the American exhibitions combined. Possibly it may mean more. Certainly it would not if there were a great salon on this side of the Atlantic to which European artists would feel it a privilege to be admitted.

Conditions were never more favorable than at the present time for the establishment of such a salon. Never was popular interest in art so marked, and never was there a more promising corps of enthusiastic art workers in this country. There are, moreover, just as competent and conscientious critics to serve as jurors here as abroad. It needs but an initial step, backed by judicious enterprise, to insure the realization of the project.

The ambitions of rival claimants for the salon should be subordinated to the national purpose. All things considered, Washington is the ideal location. The artistic talent that is being developed all over the land would find its most natural representation at the national capital, where in a sense painters, sculptors, architects, draughtsmen, illustrators, and designers would meet on equal ground. Washington, as has been well contended, is the city of all cities where national interests are dominant, where local pretensions are held in subordination, where neither cliques nor societies nor schools can exercise any controlling interest in the conduct of national affairs.

The location of the American Salon, however, may safely be left to future determination—its influence would be virtually the same whatever city were selected. The essential thing is to inaugurate a movement that will give to America a national art center and a great representative salon, in whose awards American artists would recognize a greater honor than in the medals and "mentions" bestowed by foreign juries.